Cost-effective air service

*216. SHRI ANANDSHARMA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Ministry of Civil Aviation has adopted any proposal to start cost-effective international flights to make air travel attractive and affordable;

(b) if so, the names of countries and destinations chosen for the new service alongwith the date of commencement; and

(c) whether Government propose to acquire new planes for Air India to augment the fleet strength for this purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVILAVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Air India has decided to set up a Low Cost Carrier (LCC) called Air India Express through its subsidiary company Air India Charters Limited. The proposed subsidiary airline, which will operate on short haul sectors, is aimed at making air travel more affordable, especially for Indians who are employed in Gulf, Middle East and South East Asia. The new airline is expected to commence operations by Summer 2005 and will cover destinations in Gulf/Middle East/South East Asia *viz.* Al-Ain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Muscat Salalah, Doha, Kuwait, Bahrain, Bangkok, Kuala Lampur and Singapore.

(c) The operations are proposed to be carried out through dry leased aircraft in the first phase.

Draining of gas in Tripura

*217. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of natural gas reserves discovered by ONGC in the country and the quantity of gas in each of them;

(b) whether it is a fact that huge quantity of condenser oil has been draining out at the time of isolation of natural gas in Tripura;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this condenser oil is highly inflammable and that no attempt is made to turn this oil into consumable substance;

(d) whether appropriate steps would be taken to make this gas consumable; and